Re: Basmati Patent

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for the permission. I would like to draw the attention of the House to a very serious development. Actually, day before yesterday, during the Question Hour, we were discussing the issue about the American company, Ricetec, getting three patents of one of the variants of the Basmati rice, and after the discussion, the Minister of State for Commerce, Shri Digvijay Singh, under your direction, had accepted that the Government would come out with a statement. Yesterday, I tried to raise the issue that there was no notification by the Government, and when the Government is going to come out with a *suo motu* statement. Now, the Government should also try to understand that. It is good that the Leader of the House is also there. The whole country is agitated over this issue. A debate is going on in the media, and we can cite umpteen number of examples, where individual Ministers have reacted to the questions from the Press. The situation is that the House is awaiting a statement from the Government, and very disturbing reports are there that not only Basmati, but about hundreds of agricultural items which are of specific Indian origin, have already been patented in different developed countries, and we do not understand this thing. It is not only a patent issue, but a much larger issue, the issue of bio-piracy, the issue of geographical indication and all these issues are involved in it. What steps have the Government taken in this regard because this is supposed to be a pro-active Government? But on such issues, we are saying that we are trailing behind the decisions of certain authorities in the developed countries. So, what holds back the Government? That must come before the House at the earliest, and therefore, we are shocked that the Government is not reacting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister react.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): Sir, the Government is going to make a statement on this issue before the House rises for the day today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Special Mentions.